

GUIDE FOR REVIEWER'S WRITTEN COMMENTS
Institutional National Research Service Grant Applications (T35)
Review Branch, DEA, NIDDK

The format outlined below should be followed in preparing your comments for each application assigned to you. Before you begin, review the Program Announcement for an understanding of the purpose and research objectives of the NIDDK Short-Term Research Training program. Please feel free to provide additional headings when it seems appropriate to the review. If this is a competing renewal application, evaluate the progress made during the previous funding period. If this is an amended application, address progress, changes, and responses to the critique from the previous review, indicating whether the application is improved, the same as, or worse than the previous submission. However, you are not constrained to address only the points identified in the previous review. These comments on progress and/or responsiveness to previous critiques may be provided either in a separate paragraph and/or under the appropriate criteria.

RESUME: Please provide a brief paragraph indicating in a few sentences: 1) the major thrust of the training program; 2) the major strengths and weaknesses of the program; and 3) the relative importance of the favorable and unfavorable aspects of the application which influenced your recommendation.

DESCRIPTION: A summarized description of the proposed research training program should be provided. This can be adapted directly from the application abstract itself. When appropriate, background developments leading up to submission of the application should be included. Include plans for recruitment and methods of selection of trainees. Please do not critique the application in this section.

CRITIQUE

Program Design: Evaluate the quality of the training that can be expected from the proposed program. The evaluation should include consideration of:

- Past accomplishments of the program.
- Scope and nature of the research training to be provided and the importance of these areas of research in terms of the needs of biomedical research.
- Depth of research training, including skills that will be developed and opportunities for scientific cross-fertilization and interdepartmental contacts.
- Degree and desirability of participation in formal course work, seminars, etc., within the framework of the program.

Program Director: Assess the leadership capabilities of the Program Director. Include consideration of his/her background, experience in research training and administration, publications and successful competition for research support.

Training Faculty: Assess the faculty relative to a high-quality training program, including evaluation of:

- Qualifications as basic and clinical researchers,
- Publication records and successful competition for research support,
- Opportunities for research training which parallel the aims of the training program.
- Competence and availability of each trainer to provide research training.
- Faculty stability and cooperation.

Trainees: Assess the trainees with respect to the following:

- Proposed criteria for advertisement, recruitment, selection, and assignment of trainees.
- Whether the program is adequately designed and coordinated to accommodate the number of trainees proposed for each of the years of support requested.
- Availability of well-qualified trainees.
- Evidence that trainees entering the program are likely to pursue careers in biomedical sciences.

Institutional Research Training Environment: Evaluate the following:

- Availability and adequacy of the necessary facilities (equipment, space, etc.) for the proposed research training program.
- The institutional commitment to training students in basic and clinical research.
- Indications that the institution supports the proposed program.
- Availability of appropriate courses and seminars.
- Availability of research support.

Institutional Program Monitoring Plan: Evaluate the following:

- The institution's plan for measuring the effectiveness of the training program including the productivity of the trainees (publications, abstracts, presentations),
- The impact of the training program on the institution, and
- The impact of the program on the career choices, opportunities, and further research activities of the trainees

Training Record: Briefly describe the past record of the Program Director and designated preceptors in terms of numbers and types of degrees and the current career status of past trainees (if available in the application). On the basis of this past research training record, discuss whether this program can be expected to achieve its stated goals.

BUDGET: Evaluate the reasonableness of the proposed budget and requested period of support in relation to the proposed research training. Consider whether or not the program can accommodate the proposed number of trainees. Be sure to justify any recommended adjustments.

ACTION: The application may be recommended for no further consideration, deferred, or given a priority score; if the recommendation is to score the application, please state an overall level of merit, and indicate the number of trainees and years of duration.

MINORITY RECRUITMENT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

New Applications: Evaluate the plans proposed for recruitment of minority trainees. Discuss whether the applicants are utilizing resources available to the for identifying and recruiting minority trainees and if appropriate procedures for recruitment are proposed.

Competing Renewal Applications: In addition to the above, the applicants must document past efforts at minority recruitment. Point out proposed changes or expansion of past practices. Recommend additional measures as necessary to improve the applicant's success in minority recruitment and supportive efforts to minorities in pursuit of academic careers.

NOTE: At the IRG meeting, the minority recruitment plan, as described and evaluated by the assigned reviewer, is discussed by the group after the scientific/technical merit review has been completed and a priority score assigned. The plan should not be considered in the final determination of merit.

TRAINING IN THE RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

Evaluate the plans proposed for a program on the principles of scientific integrity. Discuss whether the plans are appropriate.

NOTE: Reviewers should comment on the plan as presented in the application, but the plan should not be considered in the final determination of merit.